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Victor Plahte Tschudi, Baroque Antiquity

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and his creation of 1852, the *Germanisches Nationalmuseum* in Nuremberg. The ultimate collapse of Aufseß's original project marked several failures: that of the associations' movement, that of the museum as a research institution, that of cultural history as a university-based approach, that of the antiquarian tradition in the writing of history.

History and Its Objects is something of a mosaic made out of selective but highly relevant tiles. Most of them cohere in the avowedly intellectual approach of the author, which often leaves the reader wondering, however, about the actual place that artifacts have occupied in historical practice over time. Objects seem sometimes to fade from Miller's account of the methodological debates about them. Still, Miller has a contagious passion for how people wrote history before us. He invites us to write histories of scholarship that go beyond our own university-based ancestors and beyond our own conceived rifts between the space of the library and that of the museum. More important, by revealing the fragility of past attempts to approach history through objects, this book offers solid, much-needed foundations for furthering our own current debates about how a discipline so deeply rooted in the analysis of textual materials can make old artifacts speak and effectively turn them into historical sources.

José Beltrán

Victor Plahte Tschudi, *Baroque Antiquity: Archaeological Imagination in Early Modern Europe*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016. Pp. xv+300, 8 color plates. US\$99.99.

Analogous to the present-day emergence of "fake news" and "alternative facts," the seventeenth century saw many architectural inventions appear in print that claimed to be reconstructions of ancient buildings when, in fact, they were largely or completely fanciful. In this interesting study, Victor Plahte Tschudi sets out to explain this negligence and very adequately does so by taking his subjects, the engraver Giacomo Lauro and the Jesuit polymath Athanasius Kircher, seriously. Unlike their Renaissance predecessors, who amassed empirical evidence by carefully measuring and drawing ruins and scrutinizing ancient texts, coins, and so forth, these baroque pseudo-archaeologists were hardly interested in the actual remains or in representing them accurately (despite claiming the opposite). Placing his subjects in the broad context of Counter-Reformation Rome, Tschudi shows that Lauro and Kircher had an altogether different agenda, which revolved around resolving the paradox that Divine providence governed history and also architec-

tural history, yet God had still allowed pagan Rome to exist. By analyzing the anomalies in their faulty reconstructions, Tschudi not only reveals the strategies they used to achieve their objectives in terms of accommodating contemporary moral, political, and religious concerns, but en passant also the “architectural metaphysics” that underlaid these endeavors.

In six chapters (four on Lauro, two on Kircher), the author discusses various case studies from Lauro’s four-volume *Antiquae Urbis Splendor* (1613–28) and Kircher’s *Latium* (1671) to illustrate his wider arguments that run as red threads through the book, starting from the basic practicalities of print publishing in the first chapter to lofty reflections on prints as mirrors of philosophical worldviews in the last. In the first chapter, on “The Archaeology of Prints,” Tschudi defines Lauro’s position in the print industry: a fine engraver but a poor draftsman who shrewdly maneuvered in the competitive market for prints and their patronage, turning “Rome per se into a genre” (3, 35). Basing his work on existing prints rather than ruins, Lauro’s fabrications were often designed to circumvent the privileges with which the former were protected from plagiarism for an extended period. His ware was merchandise and should be situated in the context of popular emblem books evoking moral messages through playful interpretation.

The second chapter, “Custom-Made Rome,” describes the business model of attracting wealthy tourists and soliciting patronage. In partnership with the tall, ex-Swiss guard “Giovanno Alto” (Hans Hoch), who acted as a tour guide for northern visitors, Lauro sold them his printed sights as souvenirs, often customized with dedications. The buyers went home with an edifying reminder of the Catholic Church’s supersession of the pagan vanities of the Roman Empire.

Chapter 3, on “Moral Monuments,” shows how for this purpose archaeological evidence is ignored and architectural, artistic, and literary references are recombined into new structures with multilayered allegorical meanings. The meaning of the past is prioritized over its form. After all, ultramontane elites traveled to Rome for their moral edification: the monuments they visited were thought to transmit virtue in concrete form. A case in point is the so-called Temple of Honour and Virtue, which was thought to have consisted of two domed shrines, honor being attained only by those who first passed through the portal of virtue. This baroque *concetto* served as a frontispiece to Lauro’s collection and had a real and long-lasting influence on architecture (i.e., from Pietro da Cortona’s S. M. della Pace, to Gian Lorenzo Bernini’s design for the east facade of the Louvre, his S. Andrea al Quirinale, and Fischer von Erlach’s Karlskirche).

The fourth chapter, “Peter versus Jupiter,” deals with the puzzling influence of new St Peter’s facade on Lauro’s version of ancient Rome’s religious focal point: the temple of Capitoline Jupiter. By means of such “pious manipulation,” it is argued, divine providence was demonstrated, and pagan temples “pre-converted” as Christian shrines. Such designs functioned as architectural prophecies of the triumph of the church.

In chapter 5, on “Father Kircher’s Retreats,” Tschudi discusses Kircher’s fictitious “discovery” of the Constantinian origins of the remote church of S. Mary of Mentorella, where the roman soldier St Eustace was allegedly converted by seeing a cross in a stag’s antlers. The related publication helped to secure patronage by many great figures, including Emperor Leopold. Similarly, the ruin known as the “Villa of Maecenas” at Tivoli was redesigned to project an ideal “House of Scholars” for those in the orbit of Cardinal Francesco Barberini, to which Kircher belonged.

The last and sixth chapter, “Christ in Tivoli,” draws attention to Kircher’s subtle ways of restructuring the past. The town’s ancient oracle, the Tiburtine Sibyl, was thought to have prophesied the birth of Christ to Emperor Augustus, and this salvation-historical significance was revealed by Kircher through the means of his reconstruction of the villa of Quintilius Varus, which may be read as a typically Jesuit mental image of place (*compositio loci*) as promoted by Ignatius of Loyola in his *Spiritual Exercises*. The central event of the Incarnation as a switching point in time, shaping history itself, linked antiquity with the present in a temporal continuum. The image of the apocalyptic Vision of Daniel, a prediction of the downfall of the Roman Empire, which is found in every copy of Lauro, served a similar purpose. Thus, Tschudi concludes, Lauro and Kircher’s reconstructions challenge modern conceptions of history and temporality. The providential history they propagated was only accessible through revelation, which their works aimed to help bring across.

Baroque Antiquity offers many insights and much food for thought for scholars in a wide range of fields, not just of print culture, architectural history, and antiquarianism but also of early modern cultural history and visual culture in general. It sheds a new, distinctly baroque light on seventeenth-century attitudes toward antiquity and puts just emphasis on the wider theological imaginary in which artistic creation took place and knowledge was produced and transmitted in this period.

Eelco Nagelsmit

Alexander Bevilacqua, *The Republic of Arabic Letters: Islam and the European Enlightenment*. London: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2018. Pp. xvi + 360. US\$35.00.

This study fills an important gap in the history of the study of Muslim (or Islamicate) societies and their languages and scholarship, focusing on the period from the later sev-